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SCIENCE

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FARADAY LECTURE¹

THE FUNDAMENTAL PROPERTIES OF THE ELEMENTS

WE meet to-night to honor the memory of Michael Faraday. It is fitting that we should come to this historic place; for here were his home and his laboratory, and in this room he lectured. Science is one of the great influences promoting the solidarity of mankind; it is world-embracing, and recognizes no bounds of nationality. Faraday's work especially was a message to the whole world, and has grown into a priceless heritage for all humanity. Therefore, from time to time the generous guardians of this famous lectureship have called chemists and physicists from many lands to honor his unique genius. England, Germany, France, Italy, Russia have all sent eminent representatives; and now from across the sea there comes a pilgrim who is proud indeed to bring the homage of the new world to this shrine of cherished memories. The many ties which bind together our two nations add especial pleasure to the fulfilment of the trust.

The mystery that enshrouds the ultimate nature of the physical universe has always stimulated the curiosity of thinking man. Of old, philosophers sought to solve the cosmic problem by abstract reasoning, but to-day we agree that the only hope of penetrating into the closely guarded secret lies in the precise estimation of that which is tangible and visible. Knowledge of the

¹ Delivered before the fellows of the Chemical Society in the theater of the Royal Institution, on Wednesday, June 14, 1911. Printed in the *Journal of the Chemical Society*, Vol. 99, p. 1201, 1911. See also *Proceedings of the Chem. Soc.* Vol. 27, p. 177, 1911.